

AB-6-430x & AB-1040x

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To <ghoshr@stb.dot.gov>

cc

bcc

Subject STB docket item AB-6 (Sub, No. 430)

MEMO TO: Ms. Rhini Ghosh,
Environmental Analysis Section
Surface Transportation Board

FROM: Susan Owen Atkinson, AICP

RE: Proposed abandonment of BNSF rail line
STB docket item AB-6 (Sub, No. 430)

DATE: November 4, 2005

As an urban planner, a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, a resident and a passionate advocate of Central Oklahoma, I urge you—I beg you—to deny the BNSF request to abandon the rail line formerly known as the St. Louis—San Francisco line.

This request is being driven, not by any real need of the railroad companies operating it, but under great pressure from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) which desires to place the Union Station rail yard with a new urban expressway.

This foundational line is the *only* link between Union Station and Will Rogers International Airport, not to mention numerous other cities and strategic investments along the line. Its abandonment will facilitate the destruction of an existing, functional river bridge that would be hugely expensive to recreate when the need arises. Oklahoma City is currently implementing a 20-year, multi-billion revitalization process of which a future passenger rail link between the central business district and the regional airport is a vital component.

I urge the Surface Transportation Board to take a stand for the long-term health and wellbeing of Oklahomans. Help the state move toward a rational policy of surface transportation from which millions will benefit for the century to come.

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